



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Monday, 14 March 2022 at 10.00 am.

County Borough Councillors - Corporate Parenting Board Members in attendance: -

Councillor C Leyshon (Chair)
Councillor G Caple (Vice-Chair)
Councillor S Rees-Owen
Councillor J Bonetto
Councillor S Rees

Officers in attendance

Ms M Ropstad, Service Manager- Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments
Ms C Williams, Head of Family support & Accommodation
Mr P Mee, Group Director, Community & Children Services
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor

Others in attendance

Annabel Galt at Vfvv/Blueprint Forum – Development Officer
A W- Young person Representative

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed Members and Officer to the Corporate Parenting Board Committee.

Apologies were received from County Borough Councillors L Hooper, and Councillor E Griffiths.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

3 MINUTES

To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 31st January 2022.

4 RCT FORUM QUARTERLY REPORT

The Development Officer presented a report to the Corporate Parenting Board Committee which provided Members with a summary of the achievements made by VfCC towards the outreach of Young People and an overview of Care Day 2022.

The Development Officer introduced a young person representative to the Board and presented a written response from the young person representative based on a key theme of Care Day 2022 surrounding '*What Makes You Thrive*'. The young person representative advised the Board that what makes her thrive was knowing that there are numerous services and supporting networks which can assist in any queries or concerns she may have. She acknowledged the support service channels available, which provide her with confidence in everyday life.

The Chair thanked the young representative for her response and acknowledged the support and guidance which she provides to others.

The Development Officer began by advising Members of the importance of engagement within the group. It was advised that during the quarter, engagement had been encouraged through promotions on social media by maintaining connections with regular contact and information sharing directly with members of the group, and professionals within the Local Authority. The engagement was focused on bringing members of the group together in order to seek innovative approaches to engage with younger children aged 14-22; through collaboration with Actif Woods. The Development Officer confirmed to Members that their next collaboration with Actif Woods is scheduled for April 11th. The Development Officer acknowledged the low participation figures which were a result of the Pandemic and Storm Franklin. This led to the cancellation of face-to-face groups, Workshops, and outdoor activities; However, as a resolution, services were provided through online activities.

The Development Officer advised Members of Care Day 2022; throughout this time, the team supported care experienced young people within Rhonda Cynon Taff (RCT) to link with care experienced people from across the 5 Nations (Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland and England); This permitted young people to share their thoughts and feelings about the support provided. The Development Officer advised Members on the feedback received from young people surrounding what they needed as care experienced children or young people to thrive.

The feedback provided focused on the following: -

- More Counselling and Mental Health Services
- Further emotional Support (as young people felt that there was not enough understanding of their feelings and trauma/behavioural responses.)
- Wanting consistent and positive relationships with Social Workers who could inform them of their rights.
- Continued support for post 25 from the LA through an outreach model; and
- Continued support to manage longer term aspirations i.e., buying a car, insurance, job opportunities etc.

The Development Officer continued by advising Members on project successes surrounding care experienced parents within RCT. The Officer advised of the support provided to local group members and other care experienced parents from RCT to contribute to several consultation opportunities throughout the last quarter. The Officer confirmed the contribution of care experienced parents to the Welsh Government's *'Childcare and Parental Employment Report called Minding the Future, the Childcare Barrier facing Working Parents'*. These individuals have also contributed to the Children in Wales Period Dignity Consultation which was aimed at providing views and experiences regarding the impact of being a looked after child.

The Development Officer acknowledged the success of engagements with care experienced parents; however, in order to progress the project, VfCC will be involved in further opportunities in the next quarter for care experienced parents within RCT. The Development Officer confirmed plans in place to meet with RCT Council in order to discuss matters relating to *'Supporting Parents in and Leaving Care'* charter.

The Development Officer informed Members of the Basic Income Pilot; this project was undertaken during the last quarter whereabout VfCC worked with care experienced young people within RCT to support and provide feedback to Ministers regarding recent plans for the Basic Income Pilot for Care Experienced Young People.

The Chair was pleased with the report and the work currently being undertaken by VfCC. The Chair noted the work being undertaken by RCT in regard to Looked After Young Parents and inquired whether RCT has got the appropriate links in place with VfCC in order to further support young parents within RCT. The Service Director, Children Services advised Members of a new prevention strategy for Looked After Children called MAGI. MAGI will aim to tackle issues surrounding the increased number of care experienced parents. The Service Director, Children Services advised Members that the Corporate Parenting Board will be invited to sign up to the charter; She advised of the fairness and reasonability of the charter to parents who are in care or leaving care. The Service Director, Children Services advised Members of collaborations between VfCC with the Service Development Manager, Children Services from RCT regarding a revised contract to ensure frequent and current contact is maintained.

A query was raised from a Member surrounding the Basic income Pilot; the Member inquired about the information that was provided to the Minister concerning the project and how the scheme has been accepted by young carers.

The Development Officer advised that further information would be provided regarding the information given to the Minister during the next Corporate Parenting Board Committee. The Development Officer advised that feedback received from young carers was positive however they were aware of the negativity on social media about the pilot. The Development Officer acknowledged the support that will need to be provided in regards to this area.

Following discussions, the Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

- To note content of the report

5 YOUNG CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments presented a report which updated Members on the work with young carers in RCT during 2021/2022.

To begin, the Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct payments informed Members of the difficulties and impacts faced during the Pandemic which resulted to higher rates of referrals for young carers assessments. Due to the changes in restrictions, young carers support services were provided in smaller group sessions and individual sessions by Action for Children. The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments advised Members of the Pandemic's negative impact towards the mental health and wellbeing of young carers as they felt more isolation and anxiety.

In relation to support provided to sibling carers, the Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments advised Members of funding which has been allocated by the Welsh Government to provide tailored support for the group.

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments noted the importance of sibling support as it provides opportunities for sibling carers to spend quality time with a parent/ carer, something they often miss out on due to care needs of their brothers/sisters. As part of Carers Respite Grants and funds from an additional Winter of Wellbeing Grant, sibling carers and parents were given the opportunity to attend cooking activities, Winter Wonderland and Zip World.

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments informed Members of Young Adult Carers Service (YAC) for those aged 18-25. The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments recognised the limited support that was provided to the group due to staffing issues; however, a new YAC worker had been appointed in January to fill the post. Similarity to young carers, mental health and wellbeing have impacted the group due to the Pandemic.

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments highlighted to Members some of the services delivered to young carers; these include the Young Carers Card, Carers Covid Film and Young Carers School award.

The Young Carers Card is a Welsh Government initiative which is primarily used for identification of young carers in schools, health and other settings as young carers have repeatedly indicated this as a need. The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments informed Members that RCT was the first adopter of the scheme and thus far has had positive feedback. As part of the Carers Card improvements, the aim is to increase the benefits such as discounts in local cinemas and national retail shops.

Members were informed of the Carers Covid Film; the film featured young carers, young adult carers and adult carers. The film aimed to highlight the experience of unpaid carers of all ages during the Pandemic.

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments advised Members of the Young Carers School Award; the Award has had slow progress compared to previous years due to the impact of the Pandemic. The aim as highlighted by the Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments is to increase the awareness of the Award across schools in RCT.

The Service Director, Children Services added by commending young carers as inspirational young people. The Chair echoed this and is looking forward to resuming the face-to-face service and meeting young carers. The Chair was pleased with the Sibling Care pilot as an important project and will require further

reports on the progress. As part of the Young Carers School Award the Chair advised Members to involve Governors in order to promote this within the schools.

One Member raised a query surrounding the care groups and requested further information on what sibling carers and adult carers do in order to understand the pressures that they face. Concerns were also raised surrounding bullying of these groups and how widespread this matter is.

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments advised Members that young carers and sibling carers face higher rates of bullying due to association. Support and prevention are being implemented to tackle this matter.

The Head of access and Inclusion requested collaboration with the Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments in order to aid in the engagement of schools towards the Young Carers School Award.

Following discussion, the Corporate Parenting Board Committee **RESOLVED:**

- To acknowledge the information contained within the report

6 TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING UNDER-MENTIONED RESOLUTION:

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

7 REGULATION 73 REPORTS

The Residential Services Manager provided the Board with an update on the Regulation 73 visits undertaken at the three children's homes – Beddau, Bryndar Nantgwyn and Carn Ingli.

The Officer outlined a summary of the inspection outcomes, and it was **RESOLVED:**

- To note the contents of the report

This meeting closed at 10.49 am

**Cllr C Leyshon
Chair.**